total loans earmarked for the sector by commercial banks;

(b) if so, the details of such proposal;

(c) whether Government are also thinking of setting up of an Agricultural Finance Corporation in each State; and

(d) if so, what are the saiient features of the proposed corporation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI HUKUMDEO NARAYAN YADAV): (a) and (b) No, Sir. However, Government of India has formulated a National Agricultural Policy which envisages a growth rate of 4 per cent per annum and adequate credit support from banks in the agricultural sector.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

Promoting use of Bio-fertilizers

345. SHRI DIPANKAR MUKHERJEE: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government intend to undertake concrete steps to promote use of Bio-fertilizer, Bio-manure, micro-nutrients, as a supplement to chemical fertilizers;

(b) if so, the reasons for closing down operation of eight Bio-fertilizer units under Fertilizer Promotion and Agricultural Research Division (FP & ARD) of Hindustan Fertilizer Corporation;

(c) whether Ministry propose to take over the above units and Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs) under HFC; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI HUKUMDEO NARAYAN YADAV): (a) The Government promotes to soil test based judicious use of chemical fertilizers in conjunction with Bio-fertilizers and organic manures as

integrated nutrient management for maintaining soil health and productivity.

(b) The Government has decided on 5.9.02 to close down the entire Hindustan Fertilizer Corporation including its Fertilizer Promotion and Agricultural Research Division (FP & ARD) as the same was not found to be techno-economically viable.

(c) and (d) There is no proposal to take over any of the Bio-fertilizer units by the Ministry of Agriculture. However, regarding Krishi Vigyan Kendras under HFC, the Indian Council of Agricultural Research is setting up a Committee to decide about the appropriate organization to whom these can be transferred.

Drought in A.P.

346. SHRI P. PRABHAKAR REDDY: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether nine-member Central team visited Hyderabad, to assess the damage caused to crops and loss of employment to agriculture labour, as a result of severe drought in Andhra Pradesh;

(b) whether the team has since given its report to Government and if so, the details thereof;

(c) the action taken so far, on the recommendations made by the Central team and if not, the reasons therefor; and

(d) whether any amount has been released so far, to the State from the National Calamity Contingency Fund and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI HUKUMDEO NARAYAN YADAV): (a) to (d) Based on the findings of the Central Team and the recommendations of the Inter Ministerial Group, the High Level Committee has approved an amount of Rs.174.61 crores, as admissible to the State